

Otago Mayoral Forum

Friday 29 August 2025

9:00am-12:00pm, ORC Council Chamber

Level 2, 144 Rattray St, Dunedin

Chair: Mayor Gary Kircher

Time	Item		Paper
9:00 [5']	1	Welcome Apologies – received from Richard Saunders; Amanda Vercoe attending Minutes of the previous Otago Mayoral Forum on 13 June 2025	p. 3
9.05 [55']	2	Otago Mayoral Forum retrospective: 2022-2025 The Forum is invited to reflect on the triennium as it nears its conclusion, with a view to the triennium to come. A summary of activities, guests and correspondence is attached. A photographer will be present at the start of this item to capture the current Forum membership.	p. 6
10.00 [40']	3	Members of Parliament All Otago-representative and Otago-based members of parliament were invited to join the final Forum meeting of the triennium. Attending are Hon Mark Patterson, Hon Rachel Brooking, Todd Stephenson MP, Francisco Hernandez MP, and Ingrid Leary MP.	
10.40		<i>Morning tea (MPs attending)</i>	

11.00 [30']	4	Health system developments Dr David Gow, Chief Medical Advisor and Te Waipounamu Regional Lead, and Aroha Metcalf, Group Manager Integration, Planning Funding and Outcomes, will attend the Forum to provide an update on health system developments including Clinical Service Planning, Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago; the Southern System Network Delivery Plan; and New Dunedin Hospital. An invitation has been extended to Otago's MPs to remain for this item.	
11.30 [30']	5	General business As arising	-
12.00	-	<i>Close</i> <i>CDEM Group Joint Committee follows at 1pm</i>	

Minutes of a meeting of the Otago Mayoral Forum
held on Friday 13 June at 9.00am, Otago Regional Council Chamber
Level 2, Philip Laing House, 144 Rattray St, Dunedin and via Zoom

Membership

Mayor Tamah Alley	Central Otago District Council
Mayor Bryan Cadogan	Clutha District Council
Mayor Jules Radich	Dunedin City Council
Chair Gretchen Robertson (online)	Otago Regional Council
Mayor Glyn Lewers (online)	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Mayor Gary Kircher Waitaki (Chair)	District Council
Chief Executive Peter Kelly (online)	Central Otago District Council
Chief Executive Steve Hill (apology)	Clutha District Council
Chief Executive Sandy Graham (apology)	Dunedin City Council
Chief Executive Richard Saunders	Otago Regional Council
Chief Executive Mike Theelen (apology)	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Chief Executive Alex Parmley	Waitaki District Council

In attendance

Marianna Brook	Principal Advisor, Mayoral Forum Secretariat
Kylie Darragh	Governance Support Officer, Otago Regional Council
David Ward	GM 3 Waters and Transition, Dunedin City Council

1. WELCOME

Chair Kircher opened the meeting with a karakia.

1.1 Apologies

***That** the apologies for Mike Theelen, Steve Hill, Sandy Graham, and Peter Kelly (for lateness), be accepted.*

Moved: Mayor Bryan Cadogan

Seconded: Mayor Tamah Alley

CARRIED

1.2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

***That** the minutes of the Otago Mayoral Forum meeting held on 28 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record.*

Moved: Mayor Bryan Cadogan

Seconded: Mayor Jules Radich

CARRIED

2. REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE – KĀINGA ORA

Kerrie Young, Regional Director Kainga Ora, joined the Forum to provide an update on social housing matters across the region. Steph Voight, Otago Regional Public Service Commissioner for Otago and Southland, attended as part of the Forum's commitment to a joined-up public service in Otago.

Steph Voight advised that her team will soon be comprised of a lead for Otago and a lead for Southland. She also discussed the newly established Social Investment Fund, to be administered through three funding channels, including a regional commissioning pathway which is still in development.

Kerrie Young updated the Forum on Kainga Ora's direction from central government to balance the books. Building will continue in Timaru, Dunedin (Mosgiel), Invercargill and Gore, with various properties to be sold to free up funding – five this year and a further 20 over the next financial year.

The Residential Tenancy Act is being more stringently used, including a warning system which monitors destructive behaviour. Rent debt is being monitored closely and support offered to tenants through budgeting services.

There was an opportunity for questions. The Chair thanked Ms Voight and Ms Young for attending and the work they are doing.

9:30 am Peter Kelly joined the meeting.

9:35 am Richard Saunders left the meeting.

9:50 am Ms Voight and Ms Young left the meeting.

3. ONGOING REFORMS AND INITIATIVES

3.1 Regional Deals

Mayor Alley and Mayor Lewers provided an update on the Central Otago Lakes regional deal application. Chair Robertson added that it had been a positive collaboration produced a quality application. A decision on which regions will proceed to the next stage is expected in the coming weeks.

3.2 Water Services Delivery Plans

Members were invited to provide an update on their council's approach to Water Services Delivery Plans, including collaborative arrangements where applicable.

Mayor Alley said that submissions on a joint Council Controlled Organisation for Gore, Central Otago, Waitaki and Clutha District Councils have now closed, and each Council will now make a formal decision as to how it wishes to proceed.

Mayor Lewers said that Queenstown Lakes water services options are currently out for consultation, with a decision to be made in July to formalise next steps.

Mayor Radich said that Dunedin residents were strongly in favour of water services remaining inhouse and stand alone, and planning is well advanced for that.

3.3 Resource management reform

Chair Robertson spoke briefly on various changes affecting all councils through the resource management reforms. Te Uru Kahika and Taituarā were attending the meeting for matter 6 so further updates would be provided from them.

At 10:06 am the Forum adjourned.

At 10.32 am the Forum returned.

4. MAYORAL FORUM RELECTIONS

Otago's local authorities are required to enter into a new triennial agreement following local government elections and before 1 March 2026. Marianna Brook, Principal Advisor, Mayoral Forum Secretariat, provided an update on the triennial agreement process, including a proposal for the agreement to provide a broad framework for Councils working together in Otago, rather than its current focus on the Mayoral Forum and Chief Executive Forum. A practical outcome of this approach is to separate the terms of reference for the Mayoral Forum and the CE Forum, rather than having these contained within the agreement. This will give space and formality to the many other ways Councils work together, such as working groups and joint committees.

There was an opportunity for the mayors to express what was and was not working with the Forum in regard to the triennial agreement and arrangements in the new triennium.

10.53 am Alex Parmley joined the meeting.

11:15 am Peter Kelly left the meeting.

5. GENERAL BUSINESSS

Mayor Radich gave a short update on the new Dunedin hospital, noting that a new reference group is being formed. The group would likely include regional mayors, with more details to be provided as they become available.

No further general business was raised.

At 11:20 am Edward Ellison, Sarah Martin, Ian Telfer and Jenny Ross joined the meeting.

6. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REFORM

Al Cross, Te Uru Kahika, and Clare Wooding, Taituarā, updated the Forum on the Government's ongoing resource management reform. Their presentation outlined key proposals, the direction of change, the Ministry for the Environment's engagement structures, and implications for councils and our region. The Natural Environment Act and Planning Act will eventually replace the RMA. There was an opportunity for questions from the Forum to the Te Uru Kahika and Taituarā representatives.

11:52 am Mayor Alley left the meeting.

11:55am Mayor Alley returned to the meeting.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

There was no further business, and the meeting was closed at 12.10pm by Chair Kircher.



Chair Gary Kircher

29 August 2025

Date

Date: 29 August 2025

Drafted by: Marianna Brook, Principal Advisor, Mayoral Forum Secretariat

Otago Mayoral Forum Retrospective: 2022-2025

Purpose

1. This note invites members to reflect on the Forum's activities over the last three years, with a view to its next iteration following the election.

Background

2. The Otago Mayoral Forum is re-convened each triennium under a new Chair. By March following the election, it operates under a refreshed mandate captured in the Otago Local Authorities Triennial Agreement, which is signed by all Otago Councils.
3. From 2022 to 2025, Mayor Gary Kircher has been Chair of the Forum, providing strategic direction for agendas and papers, and chairing Forum meetings. Mayor Kircher has been supported by the Otago Chief Executives Forum, including its Chair Alex Parmley, and a secretariat based at Otago Regional Council.
4. Under the current triennial agreement, the benefits of working together for Otago are discussed under two headings: Relationships and Advocacy, and Collaboration. This note briefly discusses each of these activities.
5. The appendix is a summary of achievements, guests and correspondence from the last three years. Further information can be found on the Otago Mayoral Forum website, which provides a chronology of meetings: www.otagomayors.org.nz.

Relationships and Advocacy

6. Under 'Relationships and Advocacy' the triennial agreement states that "the parties recognise that strong relationships, shared objectives and a collective voice can better serve Otago's communities and environment."
7. Forum meetings support members' relationships with one another. The Forum also provides a venue for members of parliament, Ministers and senior officials to connect with local government leaders from across the region, and vice versa. These connections build relationships and provide channels for Otago's challenges, opportunities and needs to be communicated to Wellington.
8. It is apparent from the extensive list of guests in the appendix that engaging with the Forum is considered by many to be very worthwhile.

Collaboration

9. Under 'Collaboration', parties to the triennial agreement "recognise that working together can bring efficiencies, including through reduced duplication of effort and practical solutions such as shared services and facilities."
10. The Otago Chief Executives Forum is a key support for collaboration, including by enabling cross-council staff groups with the expertise to explore issues at a regional level.
11. A clear collaboration priority for the triennium has been water services reform, on the agenda for every meeting without exception. Early in the triennium, The Otago and Southland Mayoral Forums, working together, were central to progressing Otago and Southland's collective response to the Government's water reform agenda. This included initiating a joint analysis of cross-council and cross-regional water services options from Morrison Low, overseen by a senior-level staff working group and dedicated project manager.
12. While Otago's Councils have ultimately agreed to a mix of collaborative and single-council models, the Government's clear expectation was that all councils would explore the option of joint arrangements. The joint Mayoral Forums were able to oversee this work as it progressed, with all councils making use of the analysis for their decision-making.
13. This triennium, the region has benefited from a collaboration initiative of the previous Forum: the appointment of a Regional Waste Officer to work across councils on strategic waste initiatives. The Regional Waste Officer has an extensive work programme covering waste minimisation and recycling matters which benefit from scale, require a coordinated approach and/or are outside the resources of individual councils, especially smaller councils. Current priorities include shared solutions to battery disposal, minimising construction and demolition waste, rural waste, and pre-planning for emergency waste.

Next steps

14. This is the final meeting of the triennium. The next Forum will benefit from the experience of returning members, who will bring with them ideas for the Forum's role and operation. The first two to three meetings of the new Forum will focus on exploring ways to build on existing successful initiatives, establishing new ways of working, and setting a strategic direction.
15. To those not returning, and on behalf of the Chair, thank you for your contribution.

Appendix: Summary of Otago Mayoral Forum achievements, guests and correspondence

Key achievements

- On waters services reform, the Forum initiated a far-reaching analysis of collaboration options for Otago and Southland. The analysis was conducted by Morrison Low and underpinned recent decision-making by Councils across the two regions. Multiple joint sessions with the Southland Mayoral Forum took place throughout 2023 and 2024 to provide oversight and direction for this work.
- On solid waste and recycling, the Forum welcomed an appointment to the role of Otago Regional Waste Officer. The new role is a direct result of cross-council collaboration on waste initiated by the Forum.
- On healthcare, the Forum advocated for Otago's needs in a range of settings, including with Ministers and Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora and WellSouth officials. Topics over the triennium included localities, mental health services, and the new Dunedin hospital.
- On regional priorities, the Forum shared its 'top five' issues with all Otago-based and Otago-representative MPs following the 2023 election.
- On workforce issues, in Otago, the Forum engaged with the Regional Skills Leadership Group.
- On resource management reform, the Forum heard from sector groups working with councils to navigate the reforms, with a focus on region-wide implications.

Guests and speakers

- Hon Simeon Brown, Minister for Local Government
- Hon Mark Patterson, Minister for Rural Communities and Associate Minister for Agriculture
- Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment and MP for Invercargill
- Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island
- Hon Rachel Brooking, MP for Dunedin.
- Hon Kieran McAnulty MP
- Joseph Mooney, MP for Southland
- Scott Willis MP
- Steph Voight and Ginny Howden, Regional Public Service Commissioner for Otago
- Kerrie Young, Kainga Ora.
- Julie Anderson, Ministry of Education.
- Warren Ulusele, Dept. of Internal Affairs.
- Blake Lepper, Bridget Dickson, Stuart Barson, Nancy Todd, Endine Dixon-Harris, Sharlaine Chee, Teei Kaiaruna and Whaitiri Poutawa, Te Whatu Ora, WellSouth and Te Aka Whai Ora.
- Michael Brewster, Teresa Wooding, Marlon Bridge and Bex Sullivan, Department of Internal Affairs (on water reform).
- Laura Black and Andy Kilsby, Regional Skills Leadership Group.
- Phil Marsh, FENZ
- Mike Collins, Business South.
- Al Cross and Clare Wooding, Te Uru Kahika and Taituarā (on RM reform)

Correspondence

- To all incoming Otago-based and Otago-representative MPs, a letter of congratulations and invitation to meet the Forum.
- To the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, a letter in support of QLDC's application for funding from the Commemorating Waitangi Day Fund.
- To the Chief Executive of the Department of Internal Affairs, a letter relaying concerns about the disestablishment of the Local Government Branch within the department.
- To the Prime Minister, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Infrastructure and Minister of Finance, a letter seeking engagement on the Waste Minimisation Act and waste levy matters.